



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.1635 | FAX (517) 373.3300

[www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/vanwoerkom/](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/vanwoerkom/)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 13, 2004

Contact: Kirk Hanna  
(517) 373-1635

## **Sen. Van Woerkom welcomes governor's support on sustainable forestry initiative**

**Lansing** – State Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores, welcomed Gov. Jennifer Granholm's recent commitment to forestry, while noting that the Senate and House have already begun work on the "Forestry Package."

On Wednesday, the administration announced a proposed forestry plan during the regional governor's summit in Minnesota.

"I'm glad to see the governor is supportive of forestry, but we want to ensure that jobs will be preserved and created," Van Woerkom said.

Van Woerkom and state Rep. Tom Casperson, R-Escanaba, began discussing forestry issues with the State Department of Natural Resources and interested parties last year. Legislation is being prepared and is scheduled to be introduced in the Senate and House next week.

The key component of the forestry package is improved, sustainable management of state forest lands which includes increased, but selective timber harvest and the designation of several natural areas throughout the system.

"Increasing our timber supply will help maintain jobs and help local communities," Van Woerkom said. "This industry is essential to our economy."

Van Woerkom and Casperson began working on the sustainable forest and certification issue last summer during the state forest system's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Three public hearings were held across the state last fall to discuss ideas for improving the use and health of Michigan's 100-year-old state forest system.

(More)

Van Woerkom and Casperson's Forestry Package would:

- Expand the scope of the forest development fund;
- Establish statutory standards for sustainable forestry; and
- Identify environmentally sensitive areas in need of protection.

According to the Pulp and Paperworkers' Resource Council, the United States has lost 21 percent of the timber industry workforce since 1997.

"Since she announced this initiative, Representative Casperson and I are confident we will have her support when our legislation reaches her desk," Van Woerkom said.

###